

# Solicitation for Evaluation of Arrest Policies Program Under the Violence Against Women Act

This request for proposals announces evaluations of grants to encourage arrest policies programs funded by the Office of Justice Programs, Violence Against Women Grants Office (VAWGO) in 1997 under the Violence Against Women Act, Title IV of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. The request responds to the need for research to assess the effectiveness of arrest in the context of a systemwide, coordinated approach to domestic violence.

## The Violence Against Women Act Arrest Policies Program

Title IV of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 is the Violence Against Women Act. The Act reflects a firm commitment toward improving the criminal justice system's response to violence that occurs when any woman is threatened or assaulted by someone with whom she has or has had an intimate relationship, with whom she was previously acquainted, or who is a stranger.

Applicants may also be interested in the Solicitation for Research and Evaluation on Violence Against Women which has a proposal due date of June 25, 1997. Copies of the solicitation are available electronically from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service home page (<http://www.ncjrs.org>), or in paper form from the Response Center at 800-421-6770.

By committing significant Federal resources and attention to restructuring and strengthening the

criminal justice response to women who have been, or potentially could be, victimized by violence, the safety of all women can be more effectively ensured.

For fiscal year (FY) 1997, Congress has appropriated \$33 million to the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, which is being administered by VAWGO, for Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies. Twenty-eight million dollars was appropriated in FY 1996. For FY 1998, \$59 million has been authorized under Part U of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994. The purpose of this program is to encourage States, Indian tribal governments, and units of local government to treat domestic violence as a serious violation of criminal law.

Section 2101 of the Act enumerates the following six purposes for which Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies may be used:

1. To implement mandatory arrest or proarrest programs and policies in police departments, including mandatory or proarrest programs and policies for protection order violations.
2. To develop policies and training programs in police departments to improve tracking of cases involving domestic violence.
3. To centralize and coordinate police enforcement, prosecution, probation, or judicial responsibility for domestic violence cases in groups or units of police officers, prosecutors, probation officers, or judges.

4. To coordinate computer tracking systems to ensure communication between police, prosecutors, and both criminal and family courts.
5. To strengthen legal advocacy service programs for victims of domestic violence.
6. To educate judges and/or others responsible for judicial handling of domestic violence cases in criminal, tribal, and other courts about domestic violence and to improve judicial management of such cases.

Section 2101 of the Act requires jurisdictions to incorporate the experience of nonprofit, nongovernmental domestic violence service providers into the project planning and implementation process along with police, prosecutors, and the courts.

The Violence Against Women Grants Office has awarded 122 grants under the Arrest Policies Program. Examples of the types of programs jurisdictions intend to develop, implement and enhance include:

- Creating centralized units of police officers, prosecutors, judges, and probation and parole officers to investigate and handle domestic violence cases.

Seventy-eight jurisdictions, including eight Indian tribal communities, who received grants under the Program intend to create centralized units comprising criminal justice personnel, victim advocates, and service providers to handle domestic violence cases. Examples include multi-disciplinary domestic violence units, vertical prosecution units, order of protection units, domestic violence courts, fatality review teams, and tribal coordination councils.

- Implementing and testing the effectiveness of domestic violence arrest policies for violations of

protection orders in the context of a coordinated criminal justice and community response to domestic violence that assigns priority to the safety of the victim and holds the offender accountable.

Twenty-eight jurisdictions, including eight Indian tribal communities, who received grants under the Program, plan to establish and implement domestic violence arrest policies and policies regarding enforcement of protection orders. Several jurisdictions plan to implement policies that address domestic violence committed by law enforcement officers.

- Delivering comprehensive training programs to the police, prosecutors, probation and parole officers, and the judiciary that address the technical issues associated with policies that encourage or mandate arrest for domestic violence, address the phenomenon of domestic violence, stress collaboration and shared responsibility for ensuring the safety of the victim, seek to change attitudes that have traditionally prevented professionals in the criminal justice system from responding to domestic violence as a serious violation of criminal law, and provide information on improved methods for tracking domestic violence cases.

Fifty-six jurisdictions, including six Indian tribal communities, who received grants under the Program, plan to provide training for criminal justice personnel and victim services providers on legal, social, and psychological aspects of domestic violence.

- Developing information systems, automated registries, education and training programs, and technical assistance efforts that facilitate enforcement of protection orders within a single jurisdiction, within a single State, and from State to State.

- Linking automated information and tracking systems to enhance communication among police, prosecutors, and criminal and family courts to ensure that all of the system's components have access to consistent and complete information about an individual's domestic violence history.

Forty-nine jurisdictions, including six Indian tribal communities, receiving Program grants plan to develop and link automated tracking systems in order to monitor domestic violence cases and provide a more coordinated response by the entire criminal justice system. Examples of systems that will be established include protection order registries, victim notification, electronic monitoring, and offender criminal histories.

- Establishing and expanding advocacy services for domestic violence victims from the time an abuse report is filed through the postsentencing of the offender, including any time during which the offender is subject to probation or parole supervision.

Forty-three jurisdictions, including four Indian tribal communities, receiving Program grants plan to establish or enhance advocacy services for victims of domestic violence by hiring victim advocates to work with prosecutors and the courts, or by coordinating services with non governmental victim advocates.

Abstracts of the projects funded, programs proposed under the various purpose areas, and guidelines for the program are available on the Violence Against Women Grants Office's home page. The Office's homepage address is: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/VAWGO>. The abstracts and guidelines are also available from the U.S. Department of Justice Response Center at 800-421-6770, in the Washington, D.C. area at 202-307-1480, and by fax at 202-616-9249.

### Statement of the Problem

In the past, police departments and the criminal justice system as a whole, generally treated domestic violence as a private, family matter unlike any other violent crime. Many police departments maintained informal nonarrest policies for domestic violence, focusing instead on alternative responses such as family crisis intervention and counseling for domestic abusers (Liebman and Schwartz, 1973). In recent years many departments have implemented new policies and practices that encourage or mandate arrest of a perpetrator of domestic violence for probable cause or for violating a protection order (Cohn and Sherman, 1987; Fagan, 1996 ). The Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment (Sherman and Berk, 1984), funded by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), was the first randomized study to assess the effects of different police responses, including arrest, on domestic assault. The findings of this study suggested that the prevalence of subsequent domestic violence was reduced by nearly 50 percent when the suspect was arrested, as opposed to ordering one of the parties out of the residence or providing some form of advice to the couple.

The Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment paved the way for six replications and extensions of the experiment. This research, collectively known as the Spouse Assault Replication Program, was undertaken in a variety of U.S. police departments [Atlanta, Georgia (Deutsch, 1986); Omaha, Nebraska (Dunford et al., 1989); Charlotte, North Carolina (Hirschel et al., 1990); Miami, Florida, Metro-Dade County (Pate and Hamilton, 1992); Colorado Springs, Colorado (Berk et al., 1992); and Milwaukee, Wisconsin (Sherman et al., 1992)]. The replications and extensions produced inconsistent results (i.e., no deterrent effect of arrest was found, only certain types of offenders were deterred, or, in the worst situations, arrest escalated violence) (Garner et al., 1995). These studies do suggest, however, the

need for further research and evaluation in this area, especially as jurisdictions develop more integrated system approaches to violence against women as envisioned by the VAWA.

For example, in addition to implementing policies that mandate or encourage arrest of domestic violence perpetrators, some departments have created special domestic violence units that train personnel, developed guidelines and protocols for enforcing laws related to domestic violence, created sophisticated tracking and communication systems, investigated both misdemeanor and felony domestic assaults, developed accountability measures that ensure enforcement of the law by all officers in the department, and developed effective strategies to coordinate with other criminal justice agencies and victim service providers.

Similarly, other criminal justice agencies have implemented practices and strategies complementary to the police that prioritize the safety of victims and hold the perpetrators of domestic violence accountable. In particular, several probation departments have instituted methods of supervision designed to enhance victim safety and vigorously enforce violations of protection orders, thereby promoting coordination with the courts. A number of prosecution agencies have established domestic violence teams that work closely with legal advocates and advocates affiliated with nonprofit, nongovernmental victim service organizations. Together, prosecutors and advocates alike keep victims informed about the progress of their cases as well as the status and known whereabouts of the perpetrators. They also provide assistance in preparing long- and short-term safety plans for victims and their children. Additionally, courts are beginning to recognize the need for continuing education for judges. They also are implementing improved case-processing procedures with designated dockets to better manage domestic

violence cases and expedite scheduling of trials. To enhance these innovations and encourage the adaptation of successful strategies in additional communities across the country, agencies throughout the criminal justice system require more tools and resources. For arrest to be an effective domestic violence intervention, it must be part of a coordinated and integrated response to the problem on the part of the entire criminal justice system (Hart, 1995).

### **NIJ's Arrest Policies Program Evaluation Solicitation**

The VAWA Arrest Policies Program evaluations will enhance the overall NIJ research and evaluation program in family and domestic violence and will build upon NIJ's previous Spouse Assault Replication Program. The intent of this solicitation is to examine the process associated with, and the impact resulting from, arrest policies that are implemented in the context of newer system-wide and coordinated approaches to domestic violence.

Multisite proposals which will provide a comprehensive evaluation of the purpose areas of the VAWA Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies Program (i.e., policy development and implementation, training, education, centralized coordination, computer tracking, and victim advocacy) with a focus on system-level coordination are sought. Applicants should provide a detailed discussion of the purpose areas that will be evaluated, how sites will be selected, and the methods that will be used to assess impact. Proposals need not include all purpose areas or all sites. However, the rationale for selection of sites and purpose areas should be compelling. Applicants should also provide assurance of access to sites selected for the evaluation (i.e., letters of commitment).

Applicants are strongly encouraged to include a partnership working group comprised of relevant practitioners from each site selected in the execution of the evaluation. This partnership is intended to provide research that is relevant to the practitioner community. As the partnership working group members collaborate they should consider the spirit and intent of the Arrest Policies Program under the Violence Against Women Act in executing the evaluation strategy.

Approximately \$750,000 will be available to support up to three evaluation grants. The initial awards would cover a period of 24 months, but in anticipation of additional funding, applicants should discuss a full 3-year evaluation concept and reflect evaluation costs for 3 years. The first year of the project should focus on process, while subsequent years should focus on impact and on the development of measurable indicators of program and policy outcomes, especially ones practitioners can use over time. A decision on project continuation beyond the 24-month period will be made prior to the end of the award period.

Questions applicants should address under this solicitation include but are not limited to:

1. What impact have the projects had by purpose areas (i.e., policy development and implementation, training, education, centralized coordination, computer tracking, and victim advocacy) on the safety and protection of women and on improvements in responding to domestic violence by the criminal and civil justice systems? What impacts have the projects had on recidivism among offenders in jurisdictions where an integrated system is in place?

2. How were the programs implemented? What problems did jurisdictions encounter and how were they addressed? How did law enforcement agencies ensure that programs were implemented

by line-staff? Did federal technical assistance facilitate implementation?

3. What impact have the projects had on law enforcement organizations? Have they led to more comprehensive training of officers at all levels of rank on the dynamics of domestic violence? Has training led to changed attitudes among law enforcement officers regarding the dynamics of domestic violence? Has evidence gathering, and data collection been enhanced? Has there been an increase in reporting of domestic violence incidents? Has there been an increase in prosecution of domestic violence cases? Are greater number of offenders being convicted? Has sentencing of domestic violence offenders changed?

4. Did the arrest policies programs lead to better coordination between criminal justice agencies, and non-criminal justice organizations (e.g., victim services, social services, hospitals, shelters)?

5. What, if any, unintended consequences have resulted from the projects? For example, has there been an increase in dual arrests?

6. What impact have the projects had on minority communities?

7. How will the research from your evaluation advance the knowledge base on the impact of arrest policies?

**Measuring program effectiveness.** The need for innovation in developing ways for practitioners and policymakers to know whether their programs and strategies are achieving the goals they have set is acknowledged. This will require a new emphasis on measurable indicators that can be tracked by practitioners over time, on qualitative measures, on culturally sensitive measures and on the development of indicators using different levels of data. Outcome measures that go beyond

reoffending after arrest need to be considered and utilized. New outcome measures could address extent and effectiveness of a community-coordinated and integrated approach to reducing domestic violence, economic issues, impact on children, access to services, use of shelters and/or orders of protection, full faith and credit, safety plans, and other quality-of-life issues pertaining to the victim. Outcome measures relating to the offender could address the likelihood of threatening or battering a new partner, and the economic, social, and psychological impact of arrest on the offender. The use of data from a variety of systems (criminal justice, social service, public health) is encouraged, as is the development of indicators of outcome that can be built into on-going program record keeping and information systems. Projects may involve case studies, ethnography, victim and practitioner focus groups and surveys, data on secondary consequences, experimental and quasi-experimental designs such as comparison groups, and other relevant approaches.

**Dissemination.** NIJ is also interested in expeditious and innovative methods to disseminate the results of the evaluation that would supplement the more traditional dissemination approaches. This would include methods to make the results available at the local level in policy discussions and program improvement. Results of the evaluation are expected to be reported to NIJ and the Office of Justice Programs as they become available. This will facilitate the dissemination of findings and innovations. Applicants should provide a discussion of the types of results or products that would become available over the course of the project and should describe how the evaluation would assist States in their efforts to combat violence against women.

Applicants should be familiar with the Violence Against Women Act, the Arrest Policies

Program, the current NIJ program on violence against women, and related research and evaluation. The proposed budget for the project should include travel for the Principal Investigator to attend three coordination meetings in Washington, D.C. These meetings will provide for the coordination of Violence Against Women Act evaluation activities and field work and presentations and discussions of evaluation techniques and measures.

### How to Apply

Those interested in submitting proposals in response to this solicitation must complete the required application forms and submit related required documents. (See below for how to obtain application forms and guides for completing proposals.) Applicants must include the following information/forms to qualify for funding:

- Standard Form (SF) 424—application for Federal assistance
- Assurances
- Certifications Regarding Lobbying, Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (one form)
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
- Budget Detail Worksheet
- Negotiated indirect rate agreement (if appropriate)
- Names and affiliations of all key persons from applicant and subcontractor(s), advisors, consultants, and advisory board members. Include name of principal investigator, title, organizational affiliation (if any), department (if institution of higher education), address, phone, and fax.
- Proposal abstract
- Table of contents
- Program narrative or technical proposal
- Privacy certificate, as appropriate
- References

## Solicitation

- Letters of cooperation from organizations collaborating in the research project.
- Résumés
- Appendixes, if any (e.g., list of previous NIJ awards, their status, and products [in NIJ or other publications]).

**Due date.** Completed proposals **must be received** at the National Institute of Justice by the close of business on **June 12, 1997**. Extensions of this deadline will not be permitted.

**Number of awards.** NIJ anticipates supporting up to three grants under this solicitation.

**Award amount.** Awards totaling approximately \$750,000 will be made available for this NIJ solicitation.

**Guidance and information.** Applicants may wish to discuss their potential research topics with NIJ program staff. Those who wish to do so should contact the U.S. Department of Justice Response Center at 800-421-6770. Center staff can provide additional guidance and information to potential applicants and refer them to an appropriate NIJ professional.

**Obtaining application forms.** To obtain application forms (including a sample budget worksheet) and guidelines for submitting proposals (including requirements for proposal writers and requirements for grant recipients), applicants can:

- Access the Justice Information Center on the World Wide Web: <http://www.ncjrs.org/fedgrant.htm#nij>. At this site, the NIJ application forms and guidelines are available as electronic files that may be downloaded to a personal computer.
- Request hard copies of the forms and guidelines by mail from the National

Criminal Justice Reference Service at 800-851-3420.

- Request hard copies of the forms and guidelines by mail from the Department of Justice Response Center at 800-421-6770 (in the Washington, D. C., area, at 202-307-1480).

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